



**A**s a steward of our nation's coastal and marine environments, NOAA addresses immediate and long-term environmental threats through its Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R). Scientists are on call around-the-clock to provide the U.S. Coast Guard and other emergency responders with critical information to help minimize environmental damage caused by oil and hazardous chemical spills. Environmental experts assess ecosystems compromised by historic or ongoing contamination and work with other organizations to conduct remediation, restoration, and monitoring of critical natural resources.

### Protecting and Restoring Mississippi's Coastal and Marine Areas

NOAA trust resources in Mississippi include hundreds of miles of coastal ecosystems along bays and estuaries, habitat for shrimp, crabs, oysters, and finfish. However, spills and long-term hazardous waste sites have released chemicals into the coastal zone, contaminating habitats that support the valuable Mississippi fishing industry. The state map on the reverse page shows key response and restoration activities in the past year.

### Emergency Response

NOAA scientists and other emergency response specialists assisted the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in responding to oil and chemical incidents caused by Hurricane Katrina. NOAA provided information on flood water levels, supplied satellite



*Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi*

imagery and maps to support search and rescue efforts, and coordinated scientific and environmental support during the response. Days after the hurricane, assessment specialists were on the scene identifying, assessing, and prioritizing over 1,000 reported releases of hazardous materials and more than 400 sunken vessels.

### Assessment and Restoration

Unlined landfills at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi released a variety of hazardous materials, including paint, solvents, oils, and grease, into the Back Bay estuary, posing a chronic threat to the productive ecosystem. NOAA worked with co-trustees to determine the nature and extent of contamination and the human and ecological risks present at the site. Together with natural resource partners, NOAA helped to implement site cleanup and restoration of salt marshes. Keesler Air Force Base was awarded the 2005 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award recognizing the most outstanding installation for environmental restoration.

### Marine Debris

NOAA conducts surveys to identify marine debris hazards that threaten viable commercial fishing grounds and navigation. NOAA also provides critical data to support debris removal in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. Maps depicting debris locations and navigational obstructions are now available to regional stakeholders at [gulfofmarinedebris.noaa.gov](http://gulfofmarinedebris.noaa.gov).



*Cleanup of debris caused by flooding of the Blanchard River during Hurricane Katrina (photo courtesy FEMA)*



## Research

NOAA collaborates with other federal, state, and local programs to develop innovative approaches to protecting marine and estuarine environments through research and synthesis of information. The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) brings together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct and oversee basic and applied research, conduct outreach, and encourage strategic partnerships in spill response, assessment, and restoration.

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*NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment*

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**For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration,  
please call (301) 713-2989 or visit our Web site at  
[response.restoration.noaa.gov](http://response.restoration.noaa.gov)**

Banner photo courtesy of Lauri Lawson, NOAA, NMFS

